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INJURY TO THE HAIR

Jersey Justice—Overlooking the Patient.—At the time of the conviction of the would-be assassin of Mayor Gaynor much press comment was indulged in on the celerity of so-called Jersey justice.

Naturally there had been a conflict, a conflict which to an open-minded man would seem to be the last in the world to be found. The defense maintained, and mainly through the evidence of Dr. Henry A. Cotton of Trenton State Hospital, that the prisoner was suffering from general paresis, that he not only showed the physical signs, but the mental characteristics, and, furthermore, analysis of the cerebrospinal fluid showed the presence of lymphocytes, of positive globulin, and positive Wassermann reaction.

There never was any question, nor is there, that Dr. Cotton's standing is of the highest, and it is well recognized among the psychiatrists of the day that both by training and experience he is a man whose word is entitled to respectful credence.

There were those opposed who, while granting that some of the physical signs were present, were yet incapable of seeing, or unwilling to see, the mental features, and against the psychological and serological findings the objection was raised that a technical method, which is recognized the world over as representing the highest advance in scientific technique, was one that was not used. In the face of most unbiased evidence the prisoner was convicted and sent to jail, and now, within two or three months of the trial, we find that it is recognized, even by laymen, that he is suffering from general paresis and must be sent to the Trenton State Hospital.

This points a moral and adorns a tale. The older psychiatrists are able to diagnose a case of dementia praecox, of general paresis, of manic depressive insanity when the disease is so far advanced as to make it obvious to the man on the street that the patient is suffering from mental disease.

The facilities of modern psychiatry are such that the real psychiatrist should be able to make a diagnosis before the layman can. Refined methods of technic, advanced modes of examination, have come into the field and are bound to stay. We await with much interest the post-mortem report which undoubtedly Dr. Cotton will supply.

SMITH ELY JELLIFFE, New York.

Injury to the Hair and Its Forensic Significance.—Röttger (*Archiv für Kriminal-Anthropologie und Kriminalistik*, XLIV, 1911, 209-248) has set forth in this article the various changes which human hairs undergo as the result of age, disease and external injury.

Pathological Conditions, such as fungoid growth, cause both mechanical and chemical damage, as the splitting of the shaft, due to destruction of the cement substance, in trichoptilosis and fevers, with gradual decay from disturbed nutrition.

Normal Secretions, as sweat and urine, cause a loss of the cylindroid form of the shaft, the cortex is partly peeled off by the acids, the macerated shafts become brittle and present the characteristic brush-like appearance.

Heat effects changes in both structure and color. The intercellular air spaces in the cortex become disturbed, and vacuoles may appear in the medulla and the outline of the hair becomes styslike. Scorched areas, as from the flame from pistol shots, show fibres split off from the shaft.

Shooting off firearms at close range produces characteristic changes, not

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due to the heat alone, bending and tearing of the hair shaft, fissures in the hair, clean cuts and longitudinal fractures.

In direct injuries the lesions are modified by the nature of the underlying surface and the character of the weapon.

Injuries produced by an instrument with a flat surface against the flat portion of the skull are characterized by a long ribbon-like flattening of the hair shaft. On the convex portion of the skull the hair becomes spindle formed. Blunt instruments produce sharply circumscribed rosette-like enlargements, while objects with sharp edges produce fractures with broadening and splitting of the ends.

Changes produced by injuries inflicted *after death* depend upon the time that has elapsed since the assault and upon the influence of air, water, blood, etc., all of which conditions Röttger has especially studied. He found that hair allowed to soak in blood for six months showed definite changes, as longitudinal fissures of the shaft and splitting off of fibres.

He further placed hair in the thermostat at 40 C. for ten days in a mixture of blood and tissue fluid, but found no change in human hair, beyond a reddish brown discoloration, while rabbit's hairs showed fractures and complete disappearance of pigment.

The two chief medico-legal aspects of the changes which human hair undergo concern: (1) The possibility of determining the nature of the injury inflicted, and (2) the possibility of identification or of determining the age of the individual.

To the first question Röttger answers that in general neither the injuries inflicted during life, nor after death, produce characteristic and reliable changes; further, that we can only form an opinion as to the nature of the injury when the body region to which the hair belongs, and the surrounding conditions, are known and considered.

Identification is not always possible, on account of the color changes which hair is subject to after death. The age of the hair is equally uncertain, for in favorable conditions hair has been preserved for hundreds of years, but in conditions favoring decomposition the destructive changes are rapid and set in soon after death.

SMITH ELY JELLIFFE.

Homosexuality and the Law.—There is no doubt, writes Bruno Meyer, (*Archiv für Kriminal-Anthropologie und Kriminalistik*, XLIV, 1911, 235-249), that inversion of the sexual instinct is congenital in the vast majority of cases and that very little can be done. It is often acquired, however, during adolescence, before the sexual instinct is completely differentiated, when the nature of the influence to which the individual is subjected determines the direction of the instinct. Meyer thinks that preventive and restrictive measures should be directed chiefly towards this form, as it is precisely during adolescence that the examples of homo-sexuals—among the female sex as well—is most dangerous, especially as psychic hermaphroditism is not uncommon.

The explanation of this phenomenon is found in the fact that the male and female sexual organs are developed from the same germinal layer, so that if differentiation has not been complete the individual may anatomically belong to one sex and psychically to the other. Psychic hermaphroditism includes all transition types between normal sexual tendency and total inversion.

Homosexuality may also be acquired by adults who have experienced